

THE READING TEACHER

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GROUPING IN THE TEACHING OF READING

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(Editor's note: This year each issue of *THE READING TEACHER* will feature a group of articles dealing with some controversial question in the field of reading instruction. This issue has a series of articles on Grouping. Be sure to read the entire series to get the pros and cons of Grouping as presented by four experts.)

Articles in this series are: "Grouping in the Teaching of Reading" by Albert J. Harris, p.1; "Reading Groups in Action" by Muriel Potter, p.4; "I Used Individual Instruction" by Ethel Schmidt, p.7; and "What Do I Do With other Groups?" by Millard Black, p.10. A series of discussion questions is given on page 11 for the aid of program builders in local reading councils.)

Twenty years ago, most teachers of reading were pretending that they could teach reading effectively with all the children in the class doing the same thing at the same time. Instruction was planned for the average; the quick learners suffered from boredom, and the slow learners, from frustration and failure. Today we are all impressed with the fact that individual differences are large and important, and in theory there is complete agreement that instruction must be adapted to individual differences. But how is this to be done?

The first approach tried was "homogeneous" grouping. This meant separating the children in a particular grade into classes by putting the brighter ones into one class, the slower ones into another class, etc. This was possible in large schools but not in small ones. Although teachers in general liked this system, and research showed that achievement was neither better nor worse on the average than in non-homogeneous classes, it has declined in popularity in recent years.

There are three main reasons for this decline: (1) Wide differences within a class still remained even in "homogeneous" classes. (2) It was difficult to avoid the development

of a caste system, with the members of the slower classes the victims. As one boy in such a class put it: "We're not *supposed* to learn; we're the dummies." (3) Teaching methods were developed which could deal successfully with a fairly wide range of ability within a class.

In teaching reading, the most prevalent way of adjusting to individual differences is to divide the class into smaller groups with the teacher working directly with one group at a time. Such a procedure can be very effective. But in practice many difficulties have arisen, and teachers in many communities are raising questions. Let us take a look at some of these questions and see how they can be answered.

Is Teaching by Groups Worthwhile?

During the past twenty years, many reports have been published of programs which involve grouping for reading instruction. Most of them show substantially better results than those obtained with undifferentiated instruction. Research has not yet determined the best way of adapting classroom instruction to individual differences. Indeed, it is probable that there is no one best way and that different conditions require different solutions.

But grouping in itself does not automatically produce better learning. It simply is a means to the end of giving children, whose learning is at different levels, work that is suited to their different needs. If the same materials and methods are used in each group, the main value of grouping is wasted. If the poor readers are given reading material which is too hard for

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IN THE NOVEMBER ISSUE

Dr. Laura Zirbes and Dr. Gerald A. Yoakam will present their position in regard to *The Experience Approach to the Teaching of Reading vs. The Basic Reader Approach*. Dr. J. Wayne Wrightstone will cite research bearing on this controversial question.

GROUPING IN THE TEACHING OF READING

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them, it does not matter much if they try it in a small group or as part of the whole class. And poorly managed group instruction can result in a chaotic classroom.

Should All Reading Be Done by Groups?

Reading activities in modern schools are of three main types: developmental, recreational, and functional. Group reading lessons are primarily for developmental reading. Recreational reading is often best managed by periods of "free reading," with each child reading silently in a library book he has chosen. Functional reading includes those reading situations in which reading is used primarily as a way of finding out things. For some functional reading situations the whole class may be able to work together, as in a current events period. In others, the class can be divided into small groups or committees, each with a special assignment. In such committees, it is often desirable to have a wide range of reading skill, so that the members of a committee can supplement one another instead of each duplicating the others' work. On such a committee, a good reader can do wide research reading about the topic, while the poor reader can take major responsibility for illustrations, handwork, or other related activity. It is desirable for committees of this sort to have a different kind of composition from the grouping used for developmental reading lessons.

Some reading activities can be done by the whole class. These include appreciation activities such as audience reading, choral reading, oral book reports and discussions of individual reading, and informal dramatizations based on reading. Other whole-class activities can include certain kinds of developmental lessons, such as practice in alphabetizing and other special skills.

There should also be periods of completely individualized reading, of which there are two

main types. The free reading period, which is primarily for recreational reading, has already been mentioned. In the intermediate and upper grades it may be desirable to have a period for individual practice to overcome particular weaknesses; for these, specific types of practice exercises, such as can be found in published workbooks, are needed. During individualized reading periods the teacher can find an opportunity to give individual help to those who need it, to give informal tests, etc.

With some whole-class reading activities, some completely individualized reading, and some reading done by committees, it is obvious that a well-balanced reading program is not confined to developmental reading taught by groups.

How Should Reading Groups Be Set Up?

A teacher with a new class is often able to set up a preliminary grouping on the basis of reports from the previous teacher, or standardized test scores. If such information is not available, the first two or three weeks should provide opportunity for careful observation of each child's reading performance, and provide a basis for setting up groups.

In most classes, there is quite a wide range of reading ability and the main basis for grouping should be in terms of reading grade level as estimated by the teacher. If the class is fairly homogeneous, it may be advantageous to set up groupings in terms of specific skills on which help is needed; this is usually possible only in the higher grades.

For teachers who are inexperienced in group teaching it is often desirable to start with two groups: a large group including the average and superior readers, and a smaller group which requires easier reading material.

As the teacher becomes more accustomed to working with groups and more sensitive to individual needs, additional groups may be set up. The best readers may be separated from the average group; or they may be taken care of by numerous supplementary assignments, by acting as helpers, by engaging in activities designed to develop special skills, etc. There may be a few children who need special help with a particular skill, such as phrase reading or vowel sounds; a special group can be set up for them, to be disbanded when its purpose has been accomplished. Some teachers are able to work effectively with as many as five or six groups. For most teachers, however, three groups represent a practical maximum. For many, a two-group program, supplemented by whole-class reading activities, individualized reading activities, and varied functional reading, will pro-



vide effectively for reading needs.

After children have been assigned to groups, the teacher must be alert to signs of wrong placement. Perhaps Mary can keep up with the high group only at the cost of great effort, and Jimmie's improvement has been such that moving him up to the high group may be worthwhile. While children should not be shifted back and forth just for the sake of variety changes in group placement should be made whenever the need becomes evident.

How Can Good Social Attitudes Be Fostered?

Most important is the teacher's own attitude, which the children tend to imitate. If the teacher can praise a good try by the worst reader in the class with real enthusiasm, the class will follow suit. Children are usually very good judges of one another's performances. Whether they will be kind or cruel to one another depends to a very great extent on the example which the teacher sets. The teacher who accepts and expects individual differences in learning usually succeeds in establishing a healthy social climate in the group.

The combination of group activities with whole class reading activities, individualized reading, and committee assignments diminishes the danger that children will label each other according to their group placement, which is somewhat more likely to occur if all reading is done in the same groups.

While the fact that one group reads better than another cannot be hidden, the names assigned to the groups should not emphasize that fact. The children will often like to choose their own group names, which may be taken from Indian tribes, athletic teams, animals, etc.

How Can Efficiency in Group Work Be Achieved?

(1) Very important is the need to provide each group with reading material that is easy enough to insure success, and capable of attracting attention and maintaining interest. The slowest group usually requires material one or more grades below the official grade, and it should, of course, be new to them and not a repetition of something read in a previous grade.

(2) Careful planning is required. A weekly schedule should be drawn up showing what each group is to do during each reading period. The time required for planning decreases with experience, but even expert teachers should avoid

relying on the inspiration of the moment. The manuals which accompany modern sets of readers are rich sources of inspiration for specific lesson plans in reading.

(3) Each group must be given clear specific directions. These should include directions to follow if the main assignment is finished before the end of the period. It is desirable for the directions to be visible, so that a child who forgets what to do next does not have to interrupt the teacher.

(4) Movable furniture which can be rearranged to suit the group activity is highly desirable. However, effective group instruction can be carried on in old-fashioned classrooms with desks bolted to the floor in rows.

(5) The length of periods should be adjusted to the attention span of the children. If a period is prolonged beyond the fatigue limit, the result is restlessness, noise, and misbehavior. If reading seems to need more time, it is often better to add an extra period than to lengthen the periods.

(6) In the primary grades, it is often necessary to assign the children who are not in the reading group with which the teacher is working to some activity that can be done without much help from the teacher, such as drawing, painting, clay work, etc. If all groups in a class are capable of doing fairly independent reading, it is feasible for all groups to be reading at the same time.

(7) Many teachers find it helpful to have a chairman for each group. Although the temptation is to use the best readers as chairmen of lower groups, morale is usually better if the chairman is a member of the group, either elected or appointed on a rotating basis. The assignment of good readers as "helpers" to poor readers may also be helpful.

(8) Group instruction does not eliminate the need for individual attention; it just makes it a little easier. Within each group there is always considerable variation, not only in general reading level, but also in the pattern of specific reading skills. A slow child may need very simple thought questions; a shy child may profit from extra praise and encouragement; one may need to slow down for greater accuracy, while another needs to speed up. Much individualization can be done during the group sessions with the teacher. However, sometimes one finds a child who just cannot function in a group and needs much individual help which may have to be given outside of class hours.

READING GROUPS IN ACTION

By Muriel Potter

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Several student teachers were watching a demonstration lesson in a second grade classroom.

A number of the children were working independently at their seats. Several of them referred frequently to printed directions on a chart, apparently a four-point plan for a mural on mail transportation. Three children were working at mimeographed teacher-made written exercises. Several others were leafing through books, looking sometimes at the table of contents and sometimes at the stories and pictures. Occasionally one of these children left his seat to consult Miss Hudson, the teacher, who was sitting with a group at one end of the room.

The group around Miss Hudson read silently from copies of the same basal reader. Individuals were asking for and receiving help from her or from neighboring children. Half a dozen times a child would claim her attention in order to dictate a sentence which she printed on the blackboard. The sentences dealt with the transportation of mail. These children were reading to obtain information they would later share with others in the class.

Once Miss Hudson called their attention to a word that had troubled several children. For this word she pointed out significant structural and phonetic elements, then recalled attention to the meaning in its context.

At the other end of the room, another group of children were reading independently from books of many levels. On the blackboard beside them, had been printed a number of questions about mail transportation. The children were reading to find the answers. Everything was being used - from a paper covered primer to a volume of the classroom encyclopedia. Several groups of two and three children were working together, commenting on information as they discovered it, or giving help to one another on difficult words.

The variety of materials being read and the children's comments indicated that all were not reading at the same level or able to do so. From this group too an occasional child crossed the room to consult Miss Hudson for a moment or two.

The room was full of the hum of activity, but only a perfectionist would have called it noisy. Every child was busy, and all were busy with printed materials.

After about twenty minutes, Miss Hudson called all the children together for discussion. For the information of the visitors, one child explained that the purpose of the reading of all the children was to find as much information as possible about how mail was carried all over the United States.

The group who had been using the basal reader offered their findings first. Each child who had dictated a sentence for the record on the blackboard read his sentence aloud. Then he read from his book the sentence or paragraph which was the source of this information. He also identified the page on which it was to be found.

Then the second group made their contribution. These were the children who had been reading to answer questions printed on the blackboard. They commented on the sentences dictated by the first group, mentioning the names of books they had been reading and emphasizing the agreement of the sources. When children from this group contributed additional bits of information for the record, Miss Hudson printed these sentences on the blackboard.

The group who had been working independently at their seats, listened attentively to the discussion. Then they were asked whether they had found anything in their explorations which was not yet recorded, or which confirmed the information already obtained. One child had found a picture of the interior of a mail car, which he showed to the group and commented upon. Another had read similar material in the basal reader.

Not all of this group had been working on the general topic, and not all contributed to the discussion, but they all appeared to listen with great attention. It seemed likely that the child who had so carefully explained the details of his picture might not have been able to read well enough to get the same amount of information from print, and that perhaps some of these others were getting information on the topic for the first time.

MORE ABOUT GROUPING

is given in the other three articles in this series. Turn to page 1 to read what Dr. Albert J. Harris says about Grouping. Or turn to page 7 to read how one first-grade teacher used individual instruction with her children. Then turn to page 10 for suggestions by Millard Black on what to do with the other groups.

Reaction of Observers

The student observers were delighted but slightly puzzled. They were especially interested in Miss Hudson's bases for grouping. Some guessed that the poorer readers were those working on the mural and looking at the varied materials at their seats.

"The children chose their own activities this time," explained Miss Hudson. "There are no hard and fast group lines at any time so groups seldom have exactly the same composition. Some children work together because they make good teams. Many considerations, including the purpose of any one of our lessons, influence a child's choice or my suggestions as to where he may work.

"One main purpose of this flexible organization is to keep children from feeling that groups are organized according to achievement and that a child's achievement may be judged by the group in which he is working.

"The children themselves are excellent judges as to whether they are good, average, or poor readers. But when they are free to move from group to group they enjoy their classroom experiences, they accept their own level of achievement, and are concerned with their own progress rather than making comparison with the progress of the other children. They are not labeled or classified on an achievement basis, and they never feel excluded from class activities because of poor achievement, or separated from their friends because of differences in achievement."

Flexible Grouping

The textbooks say that reading groups provide opportunity for reducing the range of ability within a group when this would be an advantage for teaching purposes.

Grouping children because they have similar scores on a standardized reading test is less effective than grouping them because they show the same weakness in techniques of word analysis, organization of ideas, oral reading, or predicting outcomes.

Study and practice groups may be made up on the basis of informal observation in the classroom situation. Children who often understand their own reading weaknesses very well may ask for help with a particular technique. With such groups it is possible to work intensively for a short period, by demonstration, by discussion, by means of workbook exercises or teacher-made written work. Children ready to learn a new reading technique may be grouped for its introduction or development.



Helping Small Groups

When children are reading in small groups, the teacher can work with individuals or groups of two and three. This is an excellent opportunity not only to give exactly the help needed when it is needed, but also to make valuable observations for future grouping of the children.

Each child's weaknesses stand out clearly -- poor posture, moving lips, pointing fingers, difficulty in keeping the place, confusion of words with similar configuration, and above all, wandering attention that signifies the material may be too difficult.

Children who have a friendly, confident relationship to their teacher will never hesitate to ask for help. This reveals not only the kinds of help needed but common difficulties which may become the basis for special group lessons, perhaps only five or ten minutes in length.

Finding Suitable Materials

Each child may be helped to progress from point at which his teacher finds him in reading achievement. Grouping enables him to read at the level at which he is successful and independent, if the variety of available materials is wide enough. The poor reader must be able to find materials on topics of group interest which he can attack and master with relatively little prompting. When children gather around the teacher to read for enjoyment or for study, it is natural and right that they should be reading from different books, and that these books differ in level as well as subject matter.

Every teacher who uses flexible grouping becomes perforce an authority on children's read-

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READING GROUPS IN ACTION

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ing materials. She knows where there is a second grade basal reader containing social science materials that will be useful to her slow-reading fourth grader. She knows where to find fairy and folk tales with vocabulary little above first grade level. She knows where the sixth grader with fourth grade reading ability may find a story which will contribute information to the sixth grade's study of Switzerland.

Benefits of Group Learning

Grouping provides satisfying experiences and opportunities for social growth because it permits children to enjoy learning together. On some occasions they may prefer to work with friends, or with classmates who are congenial or helpful. As children gradually become sensitive to the opinions and standards of their peers, they can give and accept help from friends as well as adults. Work, like play, is more satisfying in a favorable social climate. This suggests the advisability of letting children choose their partners or co-workers on some occasions.

Grouping enables the teacher to suggest the inclusion of children in groups where they may get a particular needed experience. Sometimes leadership may be the logical result of scholastic achievement, but not always. The slow reader who has had a good deal of experience in following written directions because he uses a workbench at home under his father's instruction can join a group and give valuable assistance when they are planning to build a model village. A newcomer may have opportunities for getting acquainted with the group as he moves from cluster to cluster for different kinds of activity. An expert researcher may lend his skills -- or his books -- to one group or another as he is needed.

Again and again the necessity for flexibility in grouping -- which means flexibility in a teacher's attitude toward grouping -- must be reiterated. There are more different ways to group children than any single individual could possibly think of. The classroom situation constantly suggests new, useful ones.

Grouping enables each child to form a friendly, unthreatened relationship with his teacher, based on the help and encouragement she has given him, and the interest she has the opportunity to show in him as a person, regardless of his reading achievement. We have all known children who were excellent little workers for Miss Anderson in the third grade, but apathetic and mediocre performers for Mrs. Barski in the

fourth. Few children can resist the stimulation of a teacher's honest interest and concern for them personally as well as academically. Without the constant reforming of groups within the class many opportunities for casual but pleasant exchanges would be lost; also, the teacher learns more and more about each child's school adjustment as she observes his behavior in this social microcosm.

In Conclusion

Flexible grouping is the teacher's opportunity to know children better and so to help them more effectively. It is also her opportunity to have more fun teaching and at the same time to become a better teacher.

It has everything in its favor and nothing against it except that it requires wisdom about children and skill in teaching techniques. However, both wisdom and skill increase with effort, experience, and growing understanding of one's goals. To watch a teacher wisely guiding children in a classroom where grouping techniques are well used is to see at work an artist whose medium is education.

ONTARIO READING COUNCIL

"Parent-Teacher Cooperation" was the topic for the May meeting of the Kingston, Ontario, Reading Council. Discussion dealt with the value of parent-teacher conferences and study groups to inform parents about new methods and techniques in reading instruction.

The outcome of this study is the preparation of a small handbook which will be distributed to parents at the beginning of the fall term. It is designed to answer such queries as "What should I expect from the teacher?" and "What should the teacher expect from me?" A further outcome will be an effort to organize parent-teacher study groups throughout the city.

The Kingston Council of the ICRI has also been studying various problems of grouping. One meeting was given to a discussion of the Hamilton Plan and the Porter Plan which are being tried locally and other types of unit plans recommended for the improvement of reading instruction.

ARTICLES AND NEWS NOTES

for The Reading Teacher are eagerly solicited by the Editorial Committee. Send yours to the editor, Nancy Larrick, Care of Young America Magazines, Silver Spring, Md

I USED INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION

By Ethel Schmidt

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Gradually I was becoming dissatisfied with the way in which I was teaching reading. As a result, I took the teaching of reading as my problem while attending a summer workshop in elementary education. After doing some reading in the field and after evaluating various methods of instruction to the best of my ability, I decided to try to adjust the type of instruction in reading to the individual child. Thus, the reading experiences of the group of children who started in my first grade in September 1949 were different from those of previous groups.

Make-Up of the Group

There were 26 in the group -- 19 Negro and 7 white children. The chronological ages ran from 5 years 6 months to 6 years and 9 months. The median chronological age in September 1949 was 6 years 3 months. The socio-economic backgrounds ranged from middle class downward. Sometime between February and April of 1950 Stanford Binet tests were administered to each child by the Department of Psychological Testing. The results of these tests indicated a range of intelligence quotients from 87 to 121 with a median of 98. According to these tests, the span of mental ages was 6 to 8 years. Fifteen children had mental ages of less than 6 years and 6 months as of the beginning of first grade.

The reading readiness program was carried on as usual. These activities centered around individual interests. I attempted to guide the development of these interests so that the children would be encouraged to explore their immediate environment, to enrich vocabularies and to make some further acquaintance with written words.

The reading readiness period was also a time for increasing the child's ability to get, discuss and organize information, and formulate conclusions. These experiences were recorded on charts, in individual booklets, and by way of various art media such as finger-paint, clay, paint, etc.

New Plan of Work

At the point when children were ready to be introduced to reading from books, I deviated from my usual procedure.

I had tried to guide human relations within the classroom so that the atmosphere was friendly and understanding. The children felt free

to initiate plans and to ask for help when it was desired. The schedule was never permitted to become excessively demanding so there was time each day for some individual personal contact between the teacher and each child. We had several copies each of a variety of pre-primers on the library shelves. As a result of flexible programming, an easy atmosphere, and many attractive pre-primers, it was not long before individual children came to me to share a picture and ask for help in finding out what the words said.

We had a 45 minute "free time" each morning. This time could be used for any of the usual free-time activities of first-graders--painting, modeling in clay, finger painting, playing house, etc. In addition to these activities, reading now became a favorite free-time pursuit.

As the number of children who wanted guidance in reading increased, we found it necessary to include more time for reading in our daily plan. We added a 35-minute "reading" time in the afternoon. At first this was an extension of "free time" or individual interest time. But as the children grew in maturity, this time was used more and more for completing assignments in writing, number work, reading to follow directions, etc. Although we had these two times assigned for reading, our schedule still remained mobile. Reading was neither confined to nor considered necessary to these periods. Whenever I had free time, someone was sure to ask for help in reading.

RECORD OF INDIVIDUAL PROGRESS

Last name first name age score on reading readiness test

Any physical or emotional difficulty -- (poor hearing, vision, speech, thumb sucking, aggressive behavior, shyness, etc.)

Child's ordinal position in family -- number of children in family.

Comment at least once a week on some of these general topics:

1. Word recognition -- are there sufficient sight words for the child's stage of development? -- list techniques for which he shows a need.
2. Oral vocabulary -- is it adequate and growing?
3. Is he comfortable in a large group -- a small group?
4. Does he share in group activities?
5. Does he want to learn to read and write?

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I USED INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION

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To guide the progress of each individual it seemed important to keep a record of each child's needs and achievements. The chart on page 7 was the type of record I had planned to keep on a 3 x 5 filing card.

The other side of the card was to contain the names of the books read and the length of time spent on each book.

I soon found that a mere comment was not sufficiently meaningful. So these cards began to assume the form of anecdotal records. Since they were on filing cards, it was easy to take a few minutes now and then to jot down some comment. I soon discarded the idea of trying to make notations at any specific time. Sometimes several weeks would pass with no comment on a card but I did try to note anything of importance.

Classroom Practices in First Grade

As the reading level of some children improved, more difficult books were put on the shelves. Children still remained free to choose their own reading material. Occasionally when a child had shown very poor judgment in his choice, I would suggest a change. This happened very, very seldom. I did not insist that a child finish a book, but very few children stopped a book before they had completed it. Occasionally, a child would re-read a book. There was no word drill by groups of children, and work books were not used in first grade.

It seemed to me that children were reading to one another and to small groups of children more than was usual in other first grades. In this situation real communication was taking place and a child was obliged to read clearly and smoothly or he soon lost his audience. Competition was kept at a minimum and so children tended to find their social place in the group without regard to competency in reading.

In June 1950, the Gates Primary Tests were given. The averaged reading grade placement ranged from 1.5 to 2.54. Ten children were above the norm, one child just at the norm, and 15 children fell below the norm. The median reading grade was 1.8. Eighteen children averaged a higher reading age than mental age and 7 children averaged a lower reading age than mental age.

Classroom Practices in Second Grade

It was decided that I should continue this program with the same children through second grade. The group was the same except for one

child who left the school at the end of first grade.

The type of instruction varied during the second year only as variations were demanded by the children's increasing maturity. Teacher-pupil planning continued to be encouraged and good human relations were considered of paramount importance. Aside from the reading instruction, the class activities were much the same as most second grades --- social studies, dramatizations, movies, film strips, music, science, and art.

We made one other major change in the program of study. We did not follow the formal spelling course. Instead, each child selected a few words every week that he thought he would like to learn to spell. From these lists we selected 5 (later 8) words each week (those most frequently requested) and used them as spelling words for the entire group.

At the close of second grade, two standardized tests were given -- Gates Primary Reading tests and Gates Advanced Primary tests. Below is the averaged reading grade level for each child. Beside each test result is the I.Q. of the child who averaged that reading grade.

Gates Primary Reading Tests May 17, 1951		Gates Advanced Primary Tests May 24, 1951	
I.Q.	Reading Grade	I.Q.	Reading Grade
96	3:44	105	4.1
105	3.40	99	4.1
112	3.40	112	4.05
99	3.32	111	3.6
121	3.27	96	3.4
90	3.16	90	3.4
93	3.05	121	3.3
91	3.01	108	3.3
108	2.94	91	2.9
98	2.94	93	2.8
93	2.90	91	2.8
91	2.85	90	2.8
111	2.82	109	2.7
109	2.82	98	2.6
90	2.70	93	2.6
115	2.60	115	2.55
100	2.60	93	2.55
114	2.33	114	2.5
93	2.20	100	2.4
91	2.04	91	2.3
100	1.92	100	1.9
87	1.88	87	1.85
91	1.70	91	1.8
94	1.65		
103	1.52		

Two of the children who ranked lowest on the Primary tests did not take the Advanced Primary tests.

On the Gates Primary Reading tests, 14 children scored above the norm and 11 below. On the Gates Advanced Primary tests, 9 children scored above the norm, 3 at the norm, and 11 below the norm.

Fifteen children had a mental age of less than 6 years 6 months at the beginning of first grade. One of these left before second grade. Below are the scores as of May 17 and May 24, 1951 of the remaining 14.

I.Q.	READING GRADE LEVELS	
	Gates Primary	Advanced Primary
108	2.94	3.3
103	1.52	
100	2.60	2.4
99	3.32	4.1
96	3.44	3.4
94	1.65	
93	2.20	2.50
91	3.01	2.9
91	1.70	1.8
91	2.04	2.3
91	2.85	2.8
90	3.16	3.4
90	2.70	2.8
87	1.88	1.85

The following reading record card was made for each child and will be available for his next teacher's use.

Name _____ Date of Birth _____			
Age as of May 19 _____ I.Q. _____			
M.A. as of _____			
Standardized Test Results:			
	<u>Date</u>		
<u>Name</u>	<u>Administered</u>	<u>From</u>	<u>Scores</u>
Trends noted through anecdotal records:			

The books read by the child in grades 1 and 2 are listed on the back of the card.

Plans for Next Year

I expect to make certain changes in this method of teaching next year. I plan to group children who evidence a need for a particular skill and give instruction in that skill to this small group. In this way, skill development would be assured in a minimum time. These groups would be constantly changing as the needs of individuals changed. This would keep the advantages of individual instruction.

I have found that teaching reading individually has been an interesting and stimulating experience for me. It seems to me that the children who were taught individually profited in many ways that could not be tested by standardized tests. As a result of my evaluation of the last two years' work, I am looking forward to teaching reading next year in the same way.

CHILDREN, PARENTS, AND READING

Back of the restrained wording of a recent research report is exciting information for all who are concerned with children and the language arts. This is the report of Esther Milner in the June 1951, issue of *Child Development*, quarterly bulletin of the Society for Research in Child Development.

Miss Milner set out to study the relationship between reading readiness in first-grade children and patterns of parent-child interaction. She studied children from three schools of low, medium, and slightly above average socioeconomic levels. She selected 21 with high language I.Q. scores and 21 with low scores.

Each of the 42 children was given a private interview when he was questioned about his home life, times when he was happy and angry, his language experiences, etc. Parents of these children were interviewed at home.

Children who had high language scores showed they were accustomed to being a part of family conversations particularly at mealtime, that they expected and received warm affection from their parents, that they had a variety of books read to them.

Those who had low language I.Q. scores were unaccustomed to a warm family atmosphere and to rich verbal experiences.

In most cases, the mothers of low scorers reported children ate breakfast alone and that mealtime was not the time for conversation. Low scorers for the most part could not recall ever being "real happy." The only books they had were school books and comics.

WHAT CAN I DO WITH THE OTHER GROUPS WHILE I AM TEACHING ONE GROUP?

By Millard H. Black
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Brigham City, Utah

"What can I do with the other groups?" This plaintive question always comes up when we talk about grouping. A teacher may be sold on the idea of having several small reading groups in her class. She may be able to divide her children into three or four reading groups. She knows she can give more effective help to a small reading group of, say, six or eight children. But what about the other 25 or 30 children in the room? What will they be doing while she is helping one group with reading.

This is an old question and one for which there is no pat answer, no simple formula. The way you solve the problem in your class will depend on many factors: the needs of your children, the extent of their maturity, the nature of their interests and drives, the materials and facilities which are available in your school and community, the leadership among your pupils, and their ability to help themselves and to work with each other.

To work effectively with one reading group, the teacher wants a minimum of interruptions from the other children. Unfortunately some teachers have made this the only criterion in planning for the "other groups." There have been times when those not actually reading with the teacher have been encouraged to do almost any kind of busy work that would guarantee an uninterrupted half hour for the reading group. But this is not enough.

All classroom activities should contribute to desired learnings whether or not they are under the immediate supervision of the teacher. Therefore the thoughtful teacher plans a variety of activities for a variety of educational goals.

Below I am listing six important reading goals with examples of the kinds of activities that can be carried on independently by those children or groups not actually working with the teacher.

Developing Readiness

To many people the term *readiness* suggests only the activities of first and second graders who are in the initial developmental stages. However, the necessity of *readiness* for read-

ing any story or beginning any unit extends into all grades.

Children with independent reading ability can develop such readiness by individual or unsupervised group research on the topic or unit being introduced. Such research will be much more interesting if children have a variety of interesting materials assembled by the teacher and by their own leaders and research groups.

The preparation of bulletin boards, posters, diaramas, maps, charts, and the reading of related stories are all valuable activities designed to procure readiness.

Improving Word Recognition Skills

A well-planned workbook specifically designed to accompany a modern basic textbook will often provide for the development of phonetic and syllabic analysis skills. However, several children will need supplementary practice before independence in these techniques is acquired.

Frequently specific exercises must be designed for the specific needs of certain children. For other children, certain exercises from the workbook should be selected for him to complete. No pupil will need every page of every workbook.

This means that the teacher must be constantly alert to the needs and capabilities of each child, giving him the practice materials best suited to his needs and shifting him to the group in which he will receive most help.

Extending Comprehension

Follow-up activities can contribute effectively to this objective. Questions, jointly posed by the class after the reading of a story, may be written on the blackboard or prepared



in chart form to be answered by the group in independent reading or laboratory-type research.

Another procedure is to provide children with duplicated questions permitting a choice of answers, sentences which provide for a controlled choice of words to complete their meaning, and the matching of questions with pictures. These activities may be used to extend comprehension, either supplementing or complementing a specific story.

Increasing Speed and Pleasure in Reading

Free-time reading is ideal for this reading goal. But it means that children must have access to a variety of interesting books written for different reading levels. It also means the teacher must constantly guide and direct so that some children are not struggling to read books too difficult for them while others lose interest in books too easy.

In providing such materials it is well to consult such references as the following: *Guide to Children's Literature* published by The American Library Association and *Bibliography of Children's Books* published by the Association for Childhood Education International.

Developing Creativity

Many activities encourage a child to express his own thoughts and feelings about the things he has read and done. Such activities may lead to genuinely creative expression that will give deep satisfaction to the individual and to others in the group.

Clay, finger paints, watercolors, and oils should be available for children to use. Such materials as Lincoln Logs, Tinker-toys, and blocks will suggest making models and diaramas related to the reading experiences.

Free dramatization and pantomime may be significant activities growing out of stories read by the group and units on which children are working.

Given a little encouragement, many children will enjoy writing a story or poem as an outgrowth of other activities.

Developing Organization and Research Skills

Even third graders can learn how to make one and two-point outlines. As language arts skills increase, the complexity of the outline may also be increased. The ability to summarize in both oral and written form provides valuable exercise in the organization of data.

Functional use of a table of contents and

index will grow out of the search for stories and pictures that are related to the topic being studied.

In Conclusion

All of these activities can be carried on by individuals and by independent groups of children while the teacher is working with a reading group.

But such activities don't just happen. They grow out of long and careful planning by the teacher who is constantly alert to the needs of individual pupils and who sees new ways to spur children on to seek new materials and new skills.

TALKING IT OVER

How do you feel about grouping? What are you doing about it? To help individual readers and program-planners the following questions are suggested for group discussion following the series of articles on grouping in reading instruction.

Why is it advantageous to use grouping in the teaching of reading?

What are the bases on which children can be divided into effective reading groups?

What advance preparation will help to prevent time-wasting by other groups while the teacher is helping one reading group?

How can a teacher encourage children in "other groups" to work independently and constructively?

How can a teacher be sure that a child will not feel labeled because he is with a slow-reading group?

How can the principle of grouping apply in the upper grades and junior high school?

How can we explain grouping to parents so they will understand its significance?

REPORTS OF NEW RESEARCH

Two important reports of recent research were included in the May 1951, issue of *The Elementary English Journal*.

"Reading Achievement Here and Abroad" by William S. Gray tells of the findings of the Scottish Council for Research in Education which investigated the influence of training on reading readiness and progress in reading. In the same issue, Helena H. Zolkos reports "What Research Says About Emotional Factors in Retardation in Reading." Both carry significant information for teachers of reading.

PRACTICAL HELPS IN READING FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

By Ruth Oaks

Primary Language Arts Consultant
Oneida County, Yorkville, N.Y.

Q. When is it advisable to have children read aloud to the class?

A. Children will enjoy and profit by reading aloud to the class if they have a worthwhile purpose for such reading, if they are well prepared, and if they are faced with an audience which is in sympathy with the purposes for listening. All of these factors are necessary.

There are two major purposes for reading aloud to others. These are to give pleasure to the audience and to give the audience information. If the reader is aware of the fact that he is trying to please his audience, he is much more likely to use a conversational tone and to make effective use of the punctuation which appears in the selection. He will be careful to speak clearly so that no important part of his information will be lost to his audience.

To be well prepared to read a selection aloud, the child first reads it silently. He makes sure that he understands what he has read and this comprehension will, of course, depend on accurate recognition and pronunciation of all the words in the selection and correct interpretation of the punctuation. If time and circumstances permit oral prereading, this will add to his confidence. No child should be required or permitted to read aloud to others unless he is sufficiently prepared. He should enjoy the experience as much as the audience.

An oral reader cannot do his best unless his audience is courteous and attentive. Time spent in preparing the audience is always worthwhile. This preparation could take the form of a brief discussion by the group, an explanation by the teacher, or a short introduction by the reader himself. The interest of the audience should be centered on *what* is read rather than on *how* it is read.

Q. Are There Advantages to Using Flash Cards?

A. Flash cards when properly used, can be a very useful tool in the development of good readers. They can serve as devices for in-

creasing rapidity of perception, as a quick means of review, and as an administratively easy means of testing.

It should be understood from the beginning that the child learns nothing new when he uses flash cards. He is only strengthening the learnings which he has already acquired. Unless a "new" word is presented in a meaningful situation which provides associations that help the child to recognize the word when he sees it again, he will have great difficulty in remembering it. (This refers to children who can learn by visual-auditory methods, as most children do.) After this has been done, and the child can recognize the word accurately, then it is safe to use a flash card for that word.

If the situation should arise where the child temporarily does not recognize a word, it should immediately be put into a sentence for him so that he can again make the association. It is advisable to have a suitable sentence written on the back of the card for this purpose. This saves time and permits the child to help himself when he is not working with his teacher.

Playing "games" with flash cards permits practice situations with words in addition to those provided for in experience charts and basal readers. The child is helped to recognize *rapidly* the words which he already recognizes *accurately*.

Flash cards which contain phrases are useful in helping the child to see a whole group of words at once. He should be taught to read the phrase *silently* before making an oral response. This response should approximate his speech pattern in smoothness and speed.

The one-word cards are useful for individual testing. The teacher can quickly lay aside the cards with which a child has difficulty so that these words can be re-taught in context. She may want to make him smaller, individual cards for his most troublesome words. These, too, should have a sentence using the word, preferably from his dictation, on the back.

Q. Are Experience Charts Recommended for an Entire Class or for One Group Within a Class?

A. Experience charts can be used equally as well with a group as with a whole class. In addition they can be used successfully to record the experiences of individual children.

The most common use for experience charts is to record the activities of an entire class. If an excursion has been made outside of the classroom to the zoo or fire station, the entire class may meet together upon its return to discuss the trip. During the discussion, individual

members of the group may dictate sentences which the teacher records on the blackboard or on chart paper. The entire group is privileged to approve or disapprove of the record and to make changes.

Sometimes a small group within the class becomes interested in a special project such as a study of the weather.

In this case, only the small group would be interested in or have the necessary information for composing a record of these activities.

In the same way, an individual child may have an experience which he alone can describe. He may have gone fishing with his father or found an injured bird which required his care. He will be responsible for dictating the entire story, in this instance, since he is the only one in the group with the knowledge of the experience.

Q. Our textbooks are supplied by the state with books of a single level allotted to each grade, but the children are promoted on their social and chronological age levels. How can I group my class of 40 for reading tasks suitable to their achievement levels?

A. One solution for the elementary teacher who finds herself in this situation is to make use of what is available -- the forty books on one level. She will need to enlist the aid of her principal and that of the other teachers in her building who also have one book for each of their pupils. The idea is to put all of the books of all levels into a common pool from which each teacher may draw what she needs for each level.

Since there are as many books as children, there should be one appropriate book for each



child. If there is a surplus, it will most likely be at the fifth and sixth levels. If there is a lack, it will probably be at the primer and first reader levels. This lack can be overcome through a system of sharing. One teacher uses the books at some time during the day, then sends them to another teacher.

Some teachers may object to this plan of sharing because the books would not be available for homework. However, when basal readers are properly used, they are not sent home to be "studied," but are used in school under teacher guidance.

One factor which apparently has caused confusion in this matter is the misinterpretation of the numbers which appear on the textbooks. The number three, for instance, does not stand for grade three, it stands for the third level of difficulty. It is simply the book which is a bit more difficult than number two and less difficult than number four.

No reputable publisher says that Book 3 must be used only by children in third grade. Likewise it is doubtful that state administrators even though they have designated a certain series of textbooks to be used throughout the state, are going to object to having those books used to the best advantage of children.

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PRACTICAL HELPS IN READING FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

By Nancy Larrick

Editor, *Young America Readers*
Silver Spring, Maryland

Q. Where can I get a list of free-reading books interesting to ninth graders who read at a third or fourth grade level?

A. An excellent list of 133 such books is given on pages 114, and 115 of *Reading Aids Through the Grades* by David H. Russell and Etta E. Karp. (Revised Edition published 1951 by the Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University. \$1.10.) The list is divided into general fiction, fiction about animals books that make you laugh, books about airplanes, and science and social studies. It does not include textbooks in science, social studies, etc.

Q. My tenth graders fall down miserably on making monthly book reports. What can I do to help them?

A. Do you require a written book report on the first Monday of every month? Do you ask that it be written according to a specified outline about a book from a limited list?

If so, maybe you had better go back to examine the goals you hope to achieve. Most English teachers strive to encourage their pupils to read for the joy of reading. It is free reading, not necessarily related to the stories, poems, and plays studied in class.

But many of them knock most of the joy out of it by setting up a rigid schedule for reporting and a cast-iron formula for the written report. Such a schedule would kill the fun in anything. And such a rigidly prescribed outline would destroy the possibilities for really personal and creative work.

Three suggestions should improve such a situation. (1) Help students find books that are written for their reading level and within their field of interest. To encourage them to try different books, display a variety of books in the classroom where students can handle them and browse to their heart's content. Exhibit posters and book jackets telling about new and appealing books. Call attention to some incident or anecdote from a book that might be appealing to these youngsters.

(2) Keep the time of reporting as flexible as possible so that each child can tell about

a book he has read when it is best for him. Most children prefer to tell about a book while their enthusiasm is high. Such a report will be of greater interest to the other students too.

(3) Keep the form of reporting as informal and creative as possible. Let some youngsters make their reports orally if they wish. Encourage some to make their reports through dramatization or puppetry. Others may want to use art work to tell of scenes from the story or a mural to recount a series of incidents. Often several students who have read the same book or related books will enjoy making a group report through some form of creative expression.

Through such devices, students can gain a greater variety of skills and can use their enthusiasm and experience to "sell" the book to other potential readers.

Q. What practices will help my ninth graders learn to work out the meaning of a new word found in their reading?

A. Learning to divide words into syllables will help readers analyze new words. Once the word is divided into syllables, there is usually some clue that will help give meaning.

Knowledge of the common prefixes and suffixes will be helpful, too. Special practice may be given to individual pupils or to small groups needing this kind of help. List a number of words having the same prefix, for example, and show how that prefix carries similar meaning in each case. Set up a list of words such as *happy, kind, attractive, conscious* and *disturbed*. Show how the prefix *un-* with each word makes a new word having the opposite meaning.

Practice in finding context clues is valuable at any grade level. In the ninth grade it may be advisable to point out the various meanings that some familiar word can have.

Take the word *duck*, for example. List sentences showing various meanings for the word.

She saw a *duck* swimming in the pond.

Watch him *duck* under the water.

Duck your head when you come through the doorway.

His trousers were made of cotton *duck*.

Then help students determine the exact meaning of *duck* in each sentence. Encourage them to recount the various meanings of such words as *run, can, deposit, and stone*. Then make up sentences illustrating each meaning.

Point out the clues the sentences give as to the exact meaning of the word in the sentence. Then help students to get hints from similar clues in the sentences of their reading.



Q. What can I do to help some of my eleventh graders increase their reading speed?

A. Devices for increasing reading speed are much the same for all age levels. However, cooperation of the older student can be enlisted more readily because he can see the advantages of reading quickly.

Give the student a selection of about 500 words. Ask him to read it and be ready to answer simple questions about it. Check his reading time and record it on a graph made out just for him. Continue with similar check-ups, recording the time so that the student can easily see what progress he is making.

Monthly issues of *The Reader's Digest* and the workbooks put out by that magazine give excellent selections for speed check-ups.

Watch for lip reading when slow readers begin to concentrate and try to push themselves. Help students understand how lip reading slows them down. Give them hints on getting the meaning by sight as distinguished from actually sounding the word with lip movement and from "voicing" each syllable without sound or lip movement.

For further practice, give the student a selection typed with half-inch spaces left between the phrases or natural groups of words. Show the student that he can read each phrase at sight, almost as though it is one word. Give him the opportunity to read the selection by phrases several times. Then give him the same selection typed with the conventional spacing and have him try phrasal reading as a means of speeding his rate of reading.

Show students how they can increase their reading speed on selections printed on a narrow column as in newspapers and magazines. Encourage them to see an entire line at one glance rather than move their eyes from left to right as must be done with long lines.

Try a single line at first. If the student will focus his eyes in the middle of the line,

he can usually see the whole line without any eye movement. Now try it on the second line. Keep moving the eyes down the center of the column, line by line, and gradually increase speed. Continued practice can speed up this kind of reading tremendously. The mechanics of this device will intrigue many youngsters who have never before thought of finding ways to direct their eye movements so as to save time and effort.

Q. The social studies textbook furnished my eighth graders is far too difficult for many of the students. What can I do to arouse their interest?

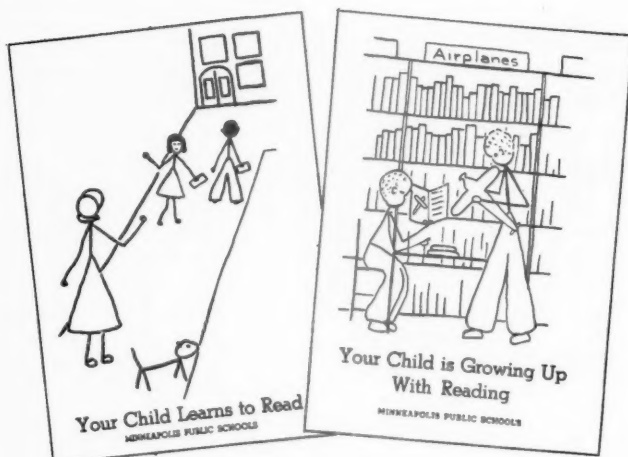
A. Since you speak of a prescribed textbook, I assume you are furnished just one textbook for all pupils regardless of their reading level. Most schools try to avoid this difficulty by furnishing a half dozen of each of five or six textbooks for each class.

Perhaps you can accomplish the same thing by a little lend-lease with another teacher who has identical books of another grade level.

If not, begin a treasure hunt for more and varied titles that will relate to the subject area of the prescribed text. Enlist the help of the students themselves. It will be valuable research experience for them to go through lists of recommended books hunting related titles appropriate to different grades and then to get books from the school and public libraries.

Help children to consult newspapers and current magazines for pictures and articles on the same subject. Show them how they can use the encyclopedias written for their level to get more readable material.

After several weeks of searching, you should have the beginnings of a classroom library that will supplement the textbook with rich materials easily read by the pupils. Such a search must be continuous, however, if you are to bring in fresh materials with new interest appeal.



MINNEAPOLIS PARENTS LEARN ABOUT READING

By Kathryn M. Neville
Classroom Teacher, Emerson School
Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Minneapolis parents are no different from parents all over the country. All are asking questions about the teaching of reading.

"Why is reading taught so differently nowadays?" they ask. "What can I do to help?"

Minneapolis teachers heard these questions so often that they knew there were many parents who were worried. If the anxious mother came to the teacher, it was fairly easy to answer her questions. But for every one who came to the school to ask, there were probably ten who worried in silence or pressured the children with their questions.

In 1950, Minneapolis school personnel produced a 136-page publication called a *Guide to Teaching Reading in the Elementary Schools*. It was prepared to help teachers in their classroom situations.

As committee members worked on this publication, they began to realize this was the sort of information that parents needed too. If such a publication could be produced for parents perhaps their anxieties could be prevented and their assistance enlisted more effectively.

Smaller committees of teachers were set up to work on some kind of publication for parents. These teachers, representing all of the elementary school levels, brought in the questions that parents had been asking them. Then they set about answering these questions. As someone put it, "It should really be called 'What Every Parent Should Know About Reading.'"

As the committees worked, they reminded them-

selves that parents are busy people. Therefore explanations must be brief enough and simple enough to be read and understood quickly.

Also many parents who should have questions about reading have never expressed any concern over reading problems. Something should be done to arouse their interest from the very start. Hence, committee members made an increased effort to write in a lively style that would be appealing. Stick drawings were added to catch and hold the attention of hasty page-turners.

Three Pamphlets for Parents

The results are seen in three 12-page pamphlets for parents. *Your Child Learns to Read* tells about reading in the first grade. *Your Child Wants to Be an Independent Reader* explains the reading program in Grades 2 and 3. *Your Child Is Growing Up With Reading* is devoted to Grades 4, 5, and 6.

These pamphlets are given particularly to parents whose children are having some difficulty with reading. They are also available to any parent who shows an interest in some aspect of reading instruction.

In the Minneapolis schools, conferences with parents are part of the regular report plan. At these conferences, teachers are able to discuss a particular child's growth and development. And parents can bring up any of their worries and wonderings about the school program.

During these conferences, reading is often discussed by the teacher and parent. To follow up such discussion the pamphlet appropriate to the child's reading level is given to the parent to read at his leisure.

What the Pamphlets Include

Here are typical questions answered in the first booklet:

What is reading readiness?

Do the children get any phonics?

How much reading can be done safely prior to the first grade?

Should parents help with reading?

How can we assist in the child's mental development?

What about the child's emotional development?

Why is social development so important to the child?

Why are we so concerned with the child's general health?

Real evidence of the success of this little pamphlet series is seen in the increased interest and enthusiasm of parents.

AIDS IN SELECTING BOOKS, MAGAZINES, AND AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS FOR CHILDREN

Prepared for The Reading Teacher by Mildred L. Batchelder, Executive Secretary, American Library Association Division of Libraries for Children and Young People.

AIDS IN SELECTING BOOKS, MAGAZINES AND PAMPHLETS

Adventuring With Books compiled by the Elementary Reading List Committee of the National Council of Teachers of English, Margaret M. Clark, NCTE, 1950. 60¢. 10 copies or more, 50¢ each.

Lists and annotates over 1,000 books for children in kindergarten through sixth grade. Indicates books useful in personal development and for understanding human relations.

An Ample Field: Books and Young People by Amelia Muson. American Library Assoc. 1950 \$3.

An unusual aid to teachers and librarians who are interested in helping young people to find reading a delight and satisfaction.

A Basic Book Collection for Elementary Grades compiled by a Joint Committee of the ALA, NEA and National Council of Teachers of English. Miriam Snow, Chrm. ALA, 1951. \$2.

Arranged under subjects, 1,000 selected books are described briefly. Grade range is given for each. Includes list of picture books and easy books. Full buying information is given.

A Basic Book Collection for High Schools compiled by a Joint Committee of the ALA, NEA, and NCTE Dorothy Dawson Chrm. ALA, 1950. \$2.75.

An annotated list of about 1,500 titles for the average high school. Arranged by subject. An index makes it possible to locate books by author, title, or subject. Publisher, price, and classification are given.

A Basic Book Collection for Junior High Schools compiled by Elsa R. Berner and Mabel S. Sacra. ALA 1950. \$1.75.

Like other books in this series, a selection of books of first importance for a small junior high school.

Books for You prepared by the Committee on Recreational Reading, National Council for Teachers of English. Mark Neville, Chrm. NCTE, 1951. 45¢.

A list for high schools, arranged by topics and by types with illustrations in black and

white and brief annotations. The NCTE list for junior high schools is being revised.

By Way of Introduction a Book List for Young People, compiled by a Joint Committee of the NEA and ALA. Jean C. Roos. Chrm. Rev. ed ALA, 1947. \$1.25.

Recreational reading for young people of high school age. Over 1,000 titles grouped according to reading interests. Annotations addressed to young readers. Price and publisher given.

Children's Books for Seventy-Five Cents or Less compiled by M.F. Altstetter. Assoc. for Childhood Education Internat'l., 1200 15th St. N.W., Washington 5, D.C. 1950. 50¢.

Children's Catalog compiled by Ruth Giles Dorothy E. Cook, Anne T. Eaton, and Dorothy H. West. 7th ed. rev. H.W. Wilson, 1946. Annual supplements. Sold on a service basis. Write for price. (8th edition, Sept. 1951).

Consists of a dictionary catalog of 4,200 books and has classified list giving subject headings. Approximately 1,100 titles are starred for first purchase. Indexes analytically 637 of the books included. Complete revision every 5 years.

Magazines for School Libraries compiled by Laura K. Martin. H.W. Wilson, 1950. \$2.75.

An important aid in choice of magazines for elementary and secondary schools.

Standard Catalog for High School Libraries compiled by Dorothy E. Cook, Anne T. Eaton, and Dorothy H. West. 5th ed. H.W. Wilson 1947. Sold on a service basis. Write for price.

Describes over 5,000 books and pamphlets. Books are starred for first purchase. Books useful for senior or junior high and for trade schools are indicated. Part I is a dictionary catalog by author, title, and subject. Part II is arranged according to Dewey Decimal Classification and with full cataloging and buying information. Revised every five years.

Subject Index to Books for Intermediate Grades. Revised Ed. ALA, 1950. \$6.

Indexes material in 1,800 storybooks, factual books, and textbooks useful in connection with units commonly taught in Grades 4-6.

Subject Index to Books for Primary Grades compiled by Eloise Rue. ALA 1943. \$2.50. First supplement ALA, 1946. \$1.25. Combined price, \$3.

Continued in next issue

THE READING TEACHER AND THE ICIRI

With this first issue for the year 1951-52, the bulletin of the International Council for the Improvement of Reading Instruction appears for the first time as *The Reading Teacher*.

In the past, this publication has been known simply as the official bulletin of the ICIRI. Month after month, prospective members have asked to whom this publication is directed. Somehow that title of "official bulletin" sounded so formal and so academic that its audience was assumed to be limited to official researchers.

Actually the whole bulletin is focused on the needs and interests of the classroom teacher of reading at all grade levels. To stress this editorial slant, the Executive Board of the organization authorized the new name of *The Reading Teacher*.

The five issues of this school year have been planned around five controversial areas in the teaching of reading. Each issue will tackle one of these topics through a group of three or four articles presenting divergent points of view. Authors have been urged to spare no punches in presenting their side of the argument.

In fact, we hope the articles will be so provocative that every reader will be stimulated to do more reading and more experimenting in his own teaching.

In this issue, four articles deal with the practice of grouping in the teaching of reading. In the November issue, the debate will be on the experience approach to the teaching of reading as opposed to the basic reader approach.

In January, we will present divergent views on the subject of phonics. February's topic will be remedial vs. developmental reading. And in April a panel of experts will state their varied positions on the pros and cons of reading tests.

We hope that these five series of articles along with the other feature articles in *The Reading Teacher* will prove stimulating and helpful to every reader.

We also hope that you will send us reports of your own experiences in the teaching of reading. And if you have some special question that needs answering, send it in for the "practical helps" pages in each issue.

NANCY LARRICK

Editor, *The Reading Teacher*

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